Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 13438 280732Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------120917 280735Z /17
O 280725Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5734
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 13438

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, IS
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH BEGIN

1. BEGIN BEGAN OUR SEPTEMBER 27 MEETING BY SAYING THAT HE WAS HAVING "HORRIBLE PROBLEMS" WITH MKS ON THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS. TODAY'S DEBATE SHOWED JUST HOW DIFFICULT THOSE PROBLEMS WERE. BEGIN SAID HE HAD BEEN VIOLENTLY ATTACKED BY HIS "BEST FRIENDS." MOSHE SHAMIR, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH WHOM BEGIN HAD BEEN CLOSE OVER HALF HIS LIFE, HAD CONDEMNED HIM VIOLENTLY AND WOULD VOTE AGAINST THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS. BUT THESE DIFFICULTIES DID NOT DETER THE PRIME MINISTER FROM FIGHTING FOR THE AGREEMENTS. THEY WERE GOOD FOR ISRAEL, EGYPT, PEACE, THE FREE WORLD, AND "ALL THE VALUES I BELIEVE IN." NONETHELESS, BEGIN CONTINUED, HE DID NOT REMEMBER A PHENOMENON IN ISRAEL LIKE THE PRESENT ONE SURROUNDING THE NATIONAL DEBATE OVER THE SUMMIT. THE NIGHT BEFORE 200 BOYS HAD COME TO HIS HOUSE AFTER MIDNIGHT SHOUTING AND SCREAMING, PREVENTING HIS WIFE AND NEIGHBORS FROM SLEEPING BEFORE 5:00 AM. BEGIN HAD TOLD THE POLICE TO LET THEM COME BECAUSE THAT WAS THE DEMOCRATIC THING TO DO, BUT THAT INCIDENT ONLY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TEL AV 13438 280732Z

REFLECTED A MUCH WIDER PROBLEM. MANY OF HIS OWN LIFE-LONG FRIENDS WERE CALLING HIM TRAITOR. AND AS MUCH AS HALF OF HIS OWN PARTY, HERUT, WAS AGAINST HIM.

2. BEGIN SAID HE WAS TELLING ME THIS BECAUSE HE WANTED TO SAY AGAIN THAT WASHINGTON MUST ACCEPT THAT IT IS UNJUST AND UNFAIR TO ASK HIM TO DO SOMETHING JUST BECAUSE OF

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SADAT'S VULNERABILITY. THE ADMINISTRATION MUST UNDER-
STAND HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS INCI-
DENTALLY ANWAR SADAT DID NOT HAVE IN EGYPT BECAUSE THEY
ARE THE PRICE OF REAL DEMOCRACY. THE IDEA THAT HE SHOULD
MAKE CONCESSIONS BECAUSE OF SADAT'S DIFFICULTIES, BEGIN
STRESSED, SHOULD NEVER AGAIN IN THE FUTURE BE REPEATED
BY U.S. OFFICIALS.

3. OBSERVING THAT THIS MAY BE ONLY THE BEGINNING, BEGIN
SAID A GREAT PROBLEM WILL OCCUR AT THE MOMENT THE
SETTLERS AT YAMIT MUST LEAVE. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WOULD
HAPPEN THEN. THE PRESS HAD SAID THAT HE TRIED TO EVADE
THE ISSUE OF THE SINAI SETTLEMENTS. THAT WAS NOT TRUE.
HE HAD TAKEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF TELLING THE KNESSET
THAT THE SETTLEMENTS WERE A PRICE FOR PEACE WITH EGYPT.
HE CLOSED THIS PART OF OUR CONVERSATION BY REPEATING YET
AGAIN THAT HE HOPED THE PRESIDENT WOULD READ THIS MESSAGE
AND UNDERSTAND THAT NEVER AGAIN WOULD BEGIN ACCEPT THE
ARGUMENT THAT HE MUST MAKE DIFFICULT COMPROMISES JUST
BECAUSE SADAT ALSO HAS PROBLEMS. LEWIS

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Sheryl P. Walter
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
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